

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently Amended) ~~The water-decomposable absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,~~ A water-decomposable absorbent article comprising:
 - a water-decomposable back layer,
 - a water-decomposable and liquid-pervious spun-laced surface layer having a plurality of perforations on an entire area thereof, and
 - a water-decomposable absorbent layer sandwiched between the back layer and the surface layer,wherein the absorbent layer is formed of ~~one of the a~~ a composite sheet of a water-soluble or water-swellaable polymer layer and a water-decomposable fibrous layer, the composite sheet being which is folded into two so that constituent layers thereof are arranged in an order of water-decomposable fibrous layer, polymer layer, polymer layer and water-decomposable fibrous layer with the uppermost water-decomposable fibrous layer being adjacent to the surface layer.
4. (Currently Amended) The water-decomposable absorbent article as set forth in claim 1 ~~1~~ 3, wherein the water-soluble or water-swellaable polymer layer is polyvinyl alcohol layer.
5. (Original) The water-decomposable absorbent article as set forth in claim 4, wherein the polyvinyl alcohol layer has a basis weight of at least 10 g/m².

6. (Original) The water-decomposable absorbent article as set forth in claim 4, wherein the polyvinyl alcohol layer is in the form of a film which is laminated and integrated with the fibrous layer.
7. (Canceled)
8. (Previously Presented) A water-decomposable absorbent article comprising a water-decomposable back layer, a water-decomposable and liquid-pervious spun-laced surface layer having a plurality of perforations on an entire area thereof, and a water-decomposable absorbent layer sandwiched between the back layer and the surface layer, wherein;
the absorbent layer includes two water-decomposable fibrous layers and a water-soluble or water-swellaable polymer layer sandwiched between the two water-decomposable fibrous layers.
9. (Original) The water-decomposable absorbent article as set forth in claim 8, wherein the water-soluble or water-swellaable polymer layer is a film of polyvinyl alcohol.
10. (Canceled)
11. (Canceled)